

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A coating apparatus for producing a silver salt photothermographic material, comprising:

(a) a supplier ~~for supplying structured to separately supply~~ a photosensitive layer liquid coating composition comprising a silver component and a non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition; and

(b) a slot coater structured for coating the photosensitive layer liquid coating composition and the non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition supplied by the supplier, onto a web to be coated, the slot coater comprising a lip plane which comes into contact with ~~at least the~~ photosensitive layer liquid coating composition, wherein a center-line surface roughness R_a of the lip plane is equal to or less than 0.5 μm .

2. (Currently Amended) A coating apparatus for producing a silver salt photothermographic material, comprising:

(a) a supplier ~~for supplying structured to separately supply~~ a photosensitive layer liquid coating composition comprising a silver component and a non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition; and

(b) a slide coater structured for coating the photosensitive layer liquid coating composition and the non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition supplied by the supplier, onto a web to be coated, the slide coater comprising a slide plane which comes into contact with ~~at least the~~ photosensitive layer liquid coating composition, wherein a center-line surface roughness R_a of the slide plane is equal to or less than 0.5 μm .

3-12. (Canceled)

13. (New) A coating apparatus for producing a silver salt photothermographic material, comprising:

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(a) a supplier for supplying a photosensitive layer liquid coating composition comprising a silver component and a non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition; and

(b) a slot coater for coating the photosensitive layer liquid coating composition and the non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition supplied by the supplier, onto a web to be coated, the slot coater comprising a lip plane provided upstream, in a conveyance direction of the web, of a slit from which the non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition is discharged, which comes into contact with the photosensitive layer liquid coating composition;

wherein a center-line surface roughness R_a of the lip plane is equal to or less than $0.5 \mu\text{m}$.

14. (New) A coating apparatus for producing a silver salt photothermographic material, comprising:

(a) a supplier for supplying a photosensitive layer liquid coating composition comprising a silver component and a non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition; and

(b) a slide coater for coating the photosensitive layer liquid coating composition and the non-photosensitive protective layer liquid coating composition supplied by the supplier, onto a web to be coated, the slide coater comprising a slide plane provided downstream of a slit from which the photosensitive layer liquid coating composition is discharged and flows toward the web, which comes into contact with the photosensitive layer liquid composition;

wherein a center-line surface roughness R_a of the slide plane is equal to or less than $0.5 \mu\text{m}$.

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